

The Chin graft uses a sheath 202 which overlies the graft. The graft 200 is then released from the sheath and deployed using a catheter 500 which positions or stabilizes the graft 200 in place. The graft 200 is then secured to the target tissue and the catheter 500 is removed. Chin does not show a stent which remains in the lumen of the graft. Nor does Chin show a stent which is removably located within the graft. This is probably a result of Chen's preference for forming the graft of synthetic material.

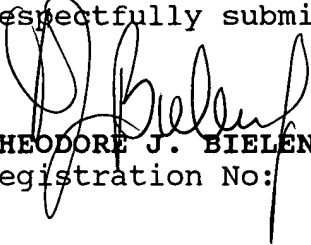
Applicant's claimed invention concerns a preserved human vessel which is directly lyophilized and having a removable stent located in the lumen of the same. The purpose of Applicant's stent is to maintain the lumen of the vessel during the lyophilization process thereafter to prevent employment of devices such as the catheter used by Chin, to reopen the vessel for surgical insertion. The use of Chin's catheter in Applicant's vessel would certainly damage the endothelial wall within the vessel which would ultimately result in failure of the graft.

In addition, the Pratt reference does not show a preserved vessel isolated from a human. Pratt's studies are restricted to animal grafts from rats and rabbits.

Thus, the combination of Pratt, Lau, Chin, and Dardik do not show Applicant's invention since the Pratt reference does not point to a human lyophilized the vessel and the Chin reference does not show a stent to maintain the patency of the lumen during lyophilization and a time period thereafter, thus minimizing damage to the lyophilized vessel when later inserted after the stent is removed.

It is requested that the application claims as submitted be reconsidered by the Examiner for allowance. A one-month extension of time is requested and the requisite fee should be charged to the credit card depicted in the 2038 form enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,


THEODORE J. BIELEN, JR.
Registration No: 27,420

TJB:jjl

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BIELEN, LAMPE & THOEMING
1990 N. California Boulevard, Suite 720
Walnut Creek, California 94596

Tel: (925) 937-1515

Fax: (925) 937-1529